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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000409

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: PREL PGOV KPKO AU SU CD LY IR ER US
SUBJECT: MINAWI ON AMIS DEATHS, SOUTH DARFUR, CHAD/SUDAN

REF: A. KHARTOUM 00407

1B. 06 KHARTOUM 02874

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Classified By: P/E Chief T. Monroe, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: Senior Assistant to the President and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Minni Minawi said that the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) rebuffed his offers of a joint SLM/AMIS investigation into the March 5 killing of two AMIS soldiers in Graida. Minawi described the SLM's efforts to re-take areas of South Darfur over-run by Arab militias in the last four months after the Sudanese government ignored his entreaties to stabilize the situation. To strengthen the SLM's position with the Government, Minawi asked for USG assistance in establishing the Security Assessment Team (SAT) and the Logistical Coordination Commission (LCC). He also predicted that sanctions against Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim would facilitate a rapprochement between Chad and Sudan and recommended that the USG facilitate negotiations between President Deby and the Chadian opposition. Without objecting to the release of Suleiman Jamous from a UN hospital, Minawi said that the Government would oppose it and warned that Jamous would curry political and military support for Ibrahim from Darfur field commanders. End summary.

AU Rejects Joint Investigation in Graida

12. (C) Meeting with Poloff on March 15, Minawi characterized his March 12 discussions with the AU regarding the attack on AMIS personnel in Graida as contentious, with the AU rejecting Minawi's offers of cooperation. Minawi claimed that Aprezi had said he was ready "to fight the SLM" and "to declare war" after the death of two of his soldiers in Graida on March 5 (Ref. A). Denying that SLM fighters were responsible, Minawi nonetheless recommended that the SLM and AMIS form a joint investigative team to locate the attackers. He offered to detain his local commander for questioning and to "call all of the guys together" so that AMIS could identify the assailants, note who was not in attendance, or exonerate the SLM, which would then assist AMIS in finding the true perpetrators. He reported that neither AMIS Force Commander Aprezi nor AU Acting Head of Mission Monique Mukaruliza responded to these suggestions.

13. (C) Minawi lamented that the international community, including the AU, did not appreciate the complexity of the situation in Graida and the interest that other groups had in undermining SLM control in the area. He recalled that the SLM had forced the JEM out of Graida after the signing of the DPA and that the JEM/Peace Wing was now attempting to occupy Graida because it was the birthplace of its leader, Abu Risha. Minawi also said that South Darfur Wali Al Haj Attal Manan was using Arab militias to gain control of the area in order to earn money off infrastructure projects, as the water supply for Nyala originated in Graida.

Tribal Fighting in South Darfur

14. (C) Referring to recent reports of fighting between the SLM and the Maalia tribe in South Darfur, Minawi explained that the conflict in fact involved two tribes from Kordofan -- one of which was a small offshoot of the Maalia -- that the Sudanese government had armed and sent into Zaghawa-majority areas over the last four months. Minawi had protested to President Bashir, Vice President Ali Osman Taha, Minister of Defense Abdulrahim Mohammed Hussein, South Darfur Wali Manan, and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) commander in Nyala since late December, all to no avail.

15. (C) The most recent incident occurred in Mutawrit -- a mixed Zaghawa-Rizeigat area -- where Arab militias had burned the village and destroyed the waterpoint. According to Minawi, the Government had built a new waterpoint within days for the Arab militia who had taken up residence. Despite conducting an investigation, the AMIS contingent in Muhamjerrya neglected to issue a report. Lacking other recourse, the SLM re-took the village by force on March 14 in an effort to restore the traditional tribal balance. Minawi claimed that the Arabs killed in the counter-attack were wearing government-issued uniforms and had Popular Defense Forces (PDF) identification cards on their bodies. Poloff suggested that the SLM utilize the Cease-fire Commission

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(CFC) to address these charges, an idea that Minawi welcomed and said he would discuss with the SLM CFC representative.

Two-Part Strategy to Strengthen SLM

¶6. (C) Minawi detailed a two-party strategy to bolster SLM's position with the government in the coming weeks. He said that the AU would soon call a meeting of international donors to address the SLM's February 10 request for the establishment of the Logistical Coordination Commission (LCC) stipulated in the DPA. The SLM leadership proposed that it hold bilateral consultations with key donors, including the USG, the UK, the EU, the Netherlands, and Norway, prior to this meeting. Poloff reminded Minawi of the long-standing U.S. prohibition against the provision of aid to combatants but said that the USG was examining mechanisms to strengthen the DPA signatories.

¶7. (C) Minawi expressed his concern that the National Congress Party (NCP) would soon move to appoint NCP-coopted members to the Security Arrangements Commission as part of its strategy to limit the effectiveness the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA). The SLM's strategy is to pre-empt the NCP's move by calling for the creation of the Security Assessment Team (SAT) at the next Joint Commission meeting. According to the DPA, the SAT should be chaired by a foreign general. The SLM suggested that the international community support a USG candidate for this post. While recognizing that the Government would never accept a U.S. general, the SLM believes that beginning with a "hammer" will force the NCP ultimately to agree to a suitable candidate, likely from Canada or Norway, who can work to counter-balance the Security Commission if necessary.

Chad/Sudan Tensions

¶8. (C) Minawi and his advisors predicted that U.S. sanctions against JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim would have a positive effect on the Darfur peace process as international condemnation of Ibrahim would lead Chad to "drop him." Though Minawi denied that Deby gave financial support to JEM -- "which all comes from Turabi, Eritrea, and Iran" -- sanctions would give Chad political cover for deporting him. Minawi stated that President Deby now saw an opportunity, with Libyan facilitation, to defuse bilateral tensions with Sudan and would not want the rebel movements to hinder this process. Libyan internal security chief Abdullah Sanoussi had told Minawi in Tripoli that President Qadhafi had given Deby an ultimatum: unify the Darfur rebels groups and push them to negotiation with Sudan. In turn, Libya would mediate between N'djamena and Khartoum to shore up Deby's regime.

¶9. (C) Without expressing any personal rancor, Minawi predicted former SLM Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator Suleiman Jamous would draw the political and military support of Darfur field commanders\$from(Sudf federal DemocraticQAI, iange *SFDA) teader Shari& Ka-ir, [GdC le!der]"A me` MQ
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¶10. (C) Minawi suggested that the USG could play a role in lessening Chad-Sudan tensions by facilitating negotiations between Deby and the Chadian opposition. In the event that Qadhafi could broker a rapprochement between Sudan and Chad, Minawi said Chad could pull back the Sudanese opposition. However, Sudan would be unable to disarm Chadian rebels operating from its territory, which would involve international mediation.

¶11. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
POWERS